

LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連れ狼

VOLUME 12

SHATTERED
STONES

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水猿

LONE WOLF AND CUB

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孤
狼

story

KAZUO KOIKE

art

GOSEKI KOJIMA



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SHATTERED STONES

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

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VOLUME

12

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB



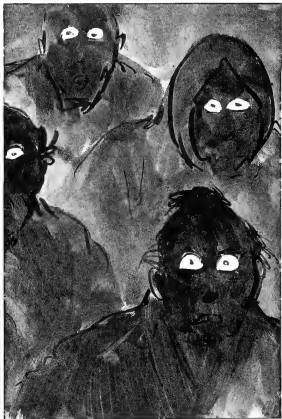
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the fifty-ninth

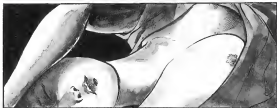


**Nameless,
Penniless,
Lifeless**





















**MORE!
MORE!**

**OVER
HERE!!**



**SPREAD
IT!**

**I CAN'T
STAND IT!**

**FUCK!
OH FUCK!**

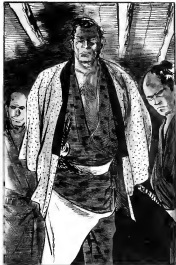
















YOU
AND THE
TROUPE?

THOUGH
I GUESS IT'S
JUST THE TWO
OF YA, HUH...

YASSIR!
JUST ME AND
UMAHARA
DAVE!



SINCE YOU
NEAR THAT
A DAY?...?

THERE'S NO
ART IN SPENDING
IT, HAH! MY 'USAKI'
BORED RIGHT
IN!



YER ON
TERRAIN
ACROSS TUNN,
PAL.

IF YA
SET UP HERE
ANOTHER THAT,
YOU'D GONNA
PAY!



I'M
TERRIBLY
SORRY



WHY DIDN'T
YA COME
PAY YER
RESPECTS
...?

YASSIR, OUR
PRODUCTION
BEING WHAT IT
IS, SIR, I FEARED
THE HONORED
HOUSE OF FENSHAN
MIGHT SUFFER FROM
ASSOCIATION.
SIR, THAT'S WHY
I DIDN'T CALL,
SIR, YASSIR.



HEH,
MAYBE
SENSE...



BUT YOU
GOTTA LOT OF
MARCHES COMIN' IN,
EVEN FOR *GRAP* LIKE
THIS WE CAN'T JUST
TURN A BLIND EYE
ON IT, SEE?

AND IF
SOMEONE GETS
THE WRONG IDEA,
WE GOTTA CLEAN
UP THE MESS 'CUZ
IT'S *GRAP* TURF,
SEE?



BUT YER
RIGHT, *THANKS* WE
CAN'T TAKE A CUT OFF A
WASTY BIT OF *FILTH*
LIKE THIS *BAID* FOR
OUR *REP*.

WHAT
SHOULD
WE DO,
SIR?



HEH, HEH,
HEH...GOOD
QUESTION

MAYBE WE
CAN *USE* YA, LINE
ENTERTAINMENT,
SEE? BETWEEN
ROUNDS OF THE
DICK, MAYBE



THE *AUTUMN*
FEST FIVEL STARTS
TOMORROW, AND
WE'RE RUNNING A
BARING HOUSE
THROUGH THE WHOLE
SHOW FOR THE
LOCAL *GYARON* AND
PATRONIS, SEE?



I WANT YA
TO WORK THE
STAGE DURING DRINK
TIME. A SIGHT FOR SOME
JOKE, RIGHT? CAN'T PAY
YA, BUT I'LL SEE
YA GET SOME
GRUB.

YASSIR!



















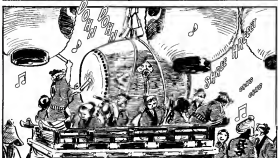




















GOING!
GOING!
HAVE ME A MARRY!





SHANN
IT, GO-
BOAT-
SAY

THAT KNOCKED
THE BOARD RIGHT
OUT OF THE GAME!
CAN'T YOU KEEP HIM
QUIET?

MY
APOLO-
GIES.



AND THAT'S
NOT ALL. YOU'VE
BEEN WATCHING AND
WATCHING, BUT YOU'VE
NEVER PUT DOWN
A CHIP.

IF YOU'RE
SAVING YOUR CHIPS
FOR THE AFTERLIFE,
MOVE ASIDE SO FOLK
CAN PLAY IN THIS
ONE.

















WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?





...KIDNAPING
MY BABY BOY,
RAPING MY WIFE,
AND STEALING OUR
HUNDRED KILO IN
DOLLARS...

...THEN YOU
TORCHED OUR
HOUSE TO HIDE THE
EVIDENCE!





FIGURED
YOU COULD
BLAME ALL ON
WANDERING
ROBBERS, DIDN'T
YOU...?



THEN...
THEN
SHE'S...!



RIGHT,
RYUZO! MY
WIFE, THE
WOMAN YOU
LOVED!

YOU
CAN'T SAY
YOU FORGOT
THIS FACE!

ALL...
AH!



HEH...
SO IT WAS
YOU AFTER
ALL.



OH-WAH???

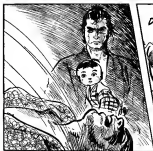


WHEN I
DROGGED POOR
O-LINE OUT OF THE
FIRE, HER MIND WAS
GONE! SHE NEVER
RECOVERED.

BUT I
DIDN'T HAVE
PROOF IT WAS
HOW SO I TOOK
THIS LITTLE PLAY
ON THE BOMB...













I
DON'T
CARE!



COME
ON, DOKTOR!
ALL MY TEARS,
CHASED BY ARCHANGELS
EVERYTHING
FOR YOU!

I'M
SUFFERING
YOU.



RYCER...
ALL I WANT IS
YOUR STINKING LIFE!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH
THESE SEVEN YEARS,
WAITING FOR YOU...?
A LIVING HELL!



PUTTING
MY WIFE
IN FRONT OF
STRAUNGERS...



ALL TO
FIND YOU.
YOU AND THAT
DARK SCAR ON
YOUR BELLY...

...THE ONLY
HAPPINESS WE
HAD LEFT WAS
DEATH!





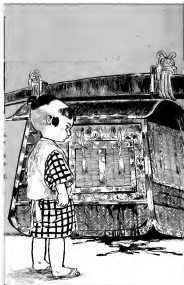




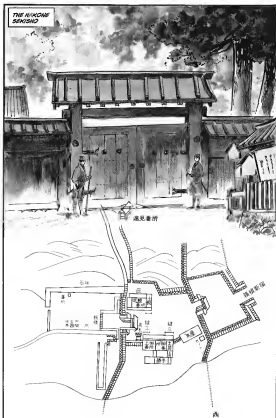


the sixtieth

Body Check



THE HAKONE
BUNSHO



THE MAKONE
SEKISHO.

BACKED BY MOUNT
BYODOU TO THE
NORTHEAST;
FACING LAKE
ASHINOKO TO THE
SOUTHWEST.

ASTRIDE THE CREST OF
THE PASS AT AKAOKAWA
MAGWAY, THIS CRITICAL
CHECKPOINT CONTROLLED
THE MAIN ROUTE FROM
EDO TO KYOTO AND
OSAKA IN THE SOUTH.

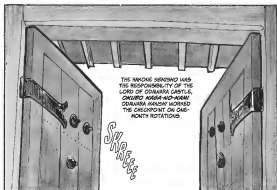


THE GATES
OPENED AT SIX
A.M. SHARP.

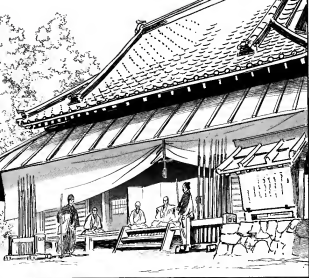










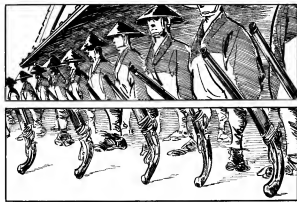
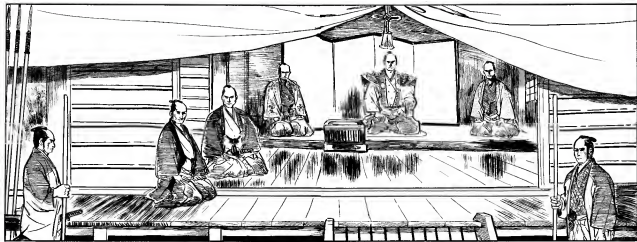


Regulations

1. All travelers must remove hats and scarves before entering.
2. Passengers must open palanquin doors for inspection.
Female passengers must also be visible for inspection.
3. To prevent delays, huge attendants and daimyō retainers will not be inspected.

However, in suspicious or special circumstances, the afordicted regulations will be strictly enforced on all.

Sekkisho /Magistrate, Odawara han





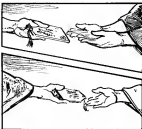


BUSH AND COMMONERS Alike
NEEDED A PERMIT TO PASS
THROUGH THE SEASAND. THE
PERMIT FOR SAMURAI WAS A
WOODEN TABLET IN THE SHAPE
OF A JAPANESE BUSHI CROSS
PIECE, MEASURING FIVE SAN
BY FOUR SAN.





THE FUKUETA FOR COMRADES WAS WRITTEN ON SPECIAL HODOMUNE PAPER FROM HODO VILLAGE IN JOSHU. IT WAS ISSUED BY THE ARISHIYU OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE THE TRAVELER LIVED, AND COUNTER-SIGNED BY THE LORD OF THE AREA OR THE MAGISTRATE OF TRAVEL.





EVERY *senjono* HAD A FEMALE EXAMINER TO INSPECT
PALANGENS WITH WOMEN PASSENGERS. TRADITIONALLY,
THE WIFE OF A *NAAGHY* PERFORMED THIS DUTY. IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN A BREACH OF BOTH *ETIGWITTE* AND
MORALS FOR A MALE *KINDAY* TO EXAMINE
A WOMAN'S PALANGEN.

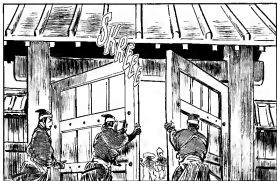


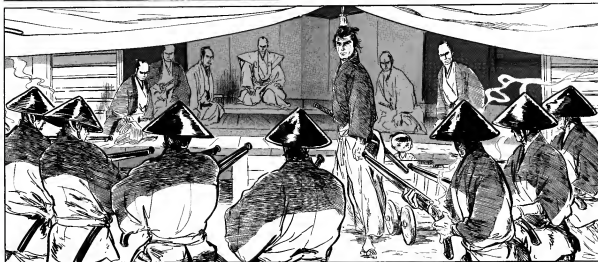


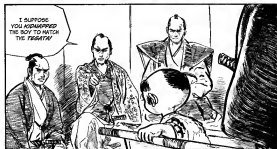


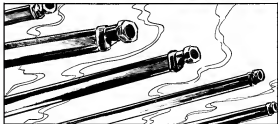




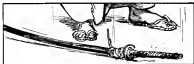














A MENSAY FROM
MATSUDARA WILL
ARRIVE TOMORROW
TO TAKE YOU
BACK, YOU'RE
FINISHED







GRABBY, SIR. I
WAS SO RELIEVED THAT
ARMAN DIDN'T TAKE HIM
HOSTAGE. YOU HANDLED
IT GRABBY-
CENTLY, SIR.





"THEY'RE TAKING
THREE PALANGINS TO
EDO, TRAVELING FOUR
AND A PART."



"THE PALANGIN GUARDS ARE ALL
BARELY FIGHTERS FROM THE
SAMURAI CLASS IN YOSHIDA."



"THE FIRST PALADIN
IS ESCORTED BY
SAHAGORI ARATA.



"ARATA'S A MASTER OF THE
POUNCE-PISTOL SPEAR, ABLE
TO ADJUST ITS LENGTH
AT WILL.

"HE'S TOO STRONG FOR
ANY OF US TO FACE
ON OUR OWN."



THE SECOND PALANQUIN IS
ESCORTED BY THE GROUP'S
ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR,
FIREEYE BUSHIDO.



HE'S BEEN CALLED
IRON-SHAFTLET FIREEYE
FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE
ASSASSINATE HE WEARS
ON BOTH ARMS.



HE'S ABLE
TO BLOCK AN
ONYX-SHARD
BLADE WITH
HIS FOREARMS,
SMASH IT IN
TWO, AND
THEN FINISH
HER OFF
WITH
EASE."



"BUT THE FANBO
PALANGUI...

"...THE FANBO IS
PROTECTED BY THE
HEAD OF THE GOJO
HARSHLY, AMONGING
ACCOMPLISH



"KURANDO IS THE GOJO'S
GRAND MASTER-HE'S ABOUT
100% FIST DRUM IS ALMOST
GOING. HE CAN CUT
DOWN FOUR MEN IN THE
SPACE OF A SINGLE
BREATH."





"FOR ALL WE KNOW, SHE
MAY NOT BE IN ANY OF
THEM AND THE WHOLE
DEPLOYMENT IS A SETUP
TO DRAW AN ATTACK."

"LADY O-NAMI SHOULD
BE IN ONE OF THE PALANQUINS...
BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHICH."

"THEY WANT TO
DRAW OUT THE
KEN DISSENTS,
AND GRAB US IN
ONE STRIKE."

"AND YET WE
CAN'T STAND
BY WHILE O-NAMI
ENTERS EDO."

"WE MUST
ATTACK
NOW...OR
NEVER!"

"YET IF WE DO
ATTACK, WE WON'T
STAND A CHANCE
AGAINST THE CREW
OF THE GEMBU
DOJO."

"THEY'VE THOUGHT
OF EVERYTHING"



"AS THINGS STAND NOW,
MATSUDARA YOSHIDA AMAN
IS THE PLAYTHING OF A
SINGLE WOMAN—O-NAMI!"

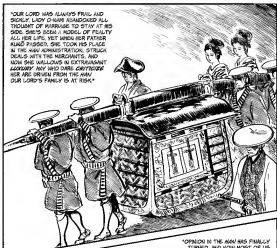


"SHE WOULD
ABSOLUTELY
POWER AT
WILL!"



"SHE'S THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE JEDDY
ARMED KING SABURUJEDDY, WHO RAISED OUR
LORD TADATERU FROM CHILDHOOD. AS SOON AS
OUR LORD LEFT FOR JAKKAW AOSTAY IN 1520,
SHE TOOK OVER THE REINS OF POWER."

"YOUR LORD WAS ALWAYS FRAIL AND SICKLY. LADY O-HAM REASONED ALL THOUGHT OF MARRIAGE TO STAY AT HIS SIDE. SHE'S BEEN A MODEL OF FEALTY ALL HER LIFE. YET WHEN HER FATHER KING PASSED, SHE TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE HAN ADMINISTRATION, STRUCK DEALS WITH THE MERCHANTS, AND NOW SHE WILLOWS IN EXTRAVAGANT LUXURY! ANY WHO DARE CRITICIZE HER ARE DRIVEN FROM THE HAN. OUR LORD'S FAMILY IS AT RISK!"

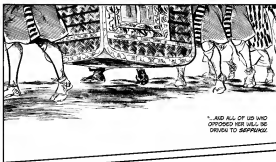


"OF COURSE IN THE HAN HIS FAMILY TURNED, AND NOW MOST OF US BELIEVE WE NEED TO ACT DECISIVELY TO ANTIPODALIZE HER. BUT O-HAM'S NO FOOL. SHE SAYS THE DANGER SHE WAS IN, AND COOKED UP AN EXCUSE TO VISIT EGG. HER REAL INTENTION IS TO APPEAL DIRECTLY TO OUR LORD TO SUPPRESS THE OPPOSITION!"





"OUR LORD STILL FLEUSTS
CHANG. IF WE LET HER REACH
SOD, ALL HOPE OF REFORM
WILL BE DASHED."

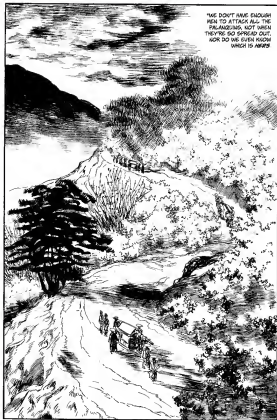


"...AND ALL OF US WHO
OPPOSED HER WILL BE
DRIVEN TO SUFFERING."



"FOR THE GOOD OF THE MAN,
FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE,
CHANG MUST DIE!"

"WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH
MEN TO ATTACK ALL THE
PALACE-GUARDS, NOT WHEN
THEY'RE SO SPREAD OUT.
NOR DO WE EVEN KNOW
WHICH IS AHEAD





"YET ONCE THEY CLEAR THE HAKONE
SEKISHO, THEY'LL BE REINFORCED
BY A GUILD FROM EDO. IT'LL BE
IMPOSSIBLE AFTER THAT. SO WE
NEED YOU—KILL LADY CHAME ON
THE ROAD TO HAKONE."



"WH-WHAT? ARE YOU
SERIOUS? INSIDE
THE SEKISHO?"

"AH... I SEE! THE PALAQUINS WILL
BE TOGETHER. THE FEMALE EXAMINER
WILL SEE WHO'S INSIDE... YES! YES, IT
COULD WORK! AND YET... INSIDE THE
SEKISHO ITSELF?"





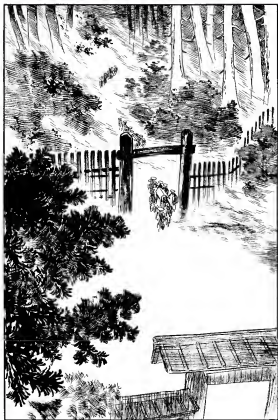






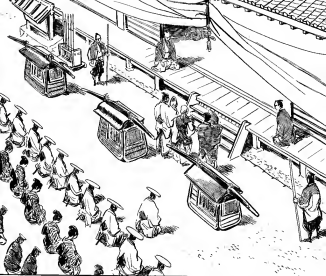
























HE
WANTS YOU
TO CHASE HIM!
THAT'S WHAT
CHILDREN
DO!

ENOUGH!!



THE BOY WAS
KIDNAPPED BY THAT
RUFFIAN ONION. WE'RE
SIMPLY LOOKING AFTER
HIM UNTIL HIS PARENTS
CLAIM HIM. PLEASE
FORGIVE THE
DELAY.



I AM THE
FEMALE
EXAMINER
OF THIS
SENSEIHO.



FORGIVE
THIS
INTRUSION...



OF COURSE
AM ALSO, BELOW
TWENTY.



WITHOUT
QUESTION.



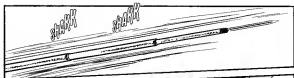




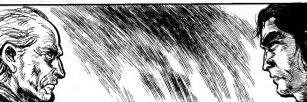




DAMN!
YOU,
SCUM!









THAT COMOTION WITH
THE BOY DISTRACTED
ME FROM FINDING YOUR
PRESENCE ON THE ROOF—
HOWA, KURADO'S
MISTAKE OF A
LIFETIME!



I WALKED
RIGHT INTO
YOUR TRAP!

....
....



IF NOW
STOOP TO SUCH
AMUSEMENT, THEN I,
TOO, NEED NO
RESENT...

...AT
CUTTING
DOWN AN
UNWOMED
HAIR



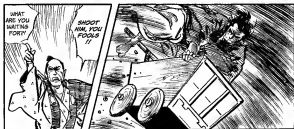
PREPARE!





THE INNER
SECRETS
OF Y-KABU
SAMURAI-
DOJI...











M-ANHEHY!

TAKE HIM
HOSTAGE
AGAIN? AFTER
ALL YOU'VE
DONE!



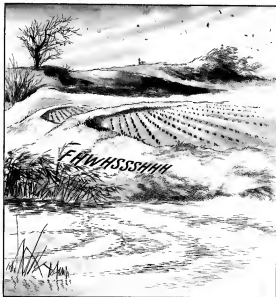
ARE... ARE
YOU EVEN
HUMAN?!



the sixty-first

Shattered Stones



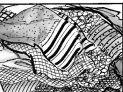














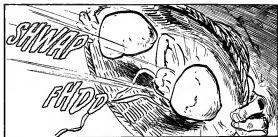






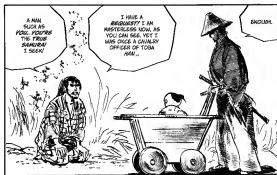


























CAN YOU KILL A PERSON WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE?

CAN YOU SPEAK A PERSON'S POWER WITHOUT STEALING THEIR LIFE...?

....
....



TO THIS PERSON, LOSS OF POWER IS WORSE THAN DEATH.



ONCE SHE WAS MY WIFE.



TODAY, HOWEVER, SHE IS THE COME-LIKE MARCHED, SERVING MAGARU SEIZEN, THE REGIS-TERED FORMER LORD OF TORA HAN.

A LARGENESS WOMAN, SANCTIFIED OF JUDGMENT, SHE STAGED A LITTLE PERFORMANCE, FINISHING HERSELF IN FRONT OF OUR FORMER LORD AS HE JOURNEYED THROUGH THE HAN ON HORSEBACK.



SHE
SACRIFICED
HER WAY INTO
HIS HEART,
AND HAD ME
BANNISHED.

AND NOW
SHE RUNS
THE AWAY FROM
THE SHADOWS,
THE SHALLOW
CREATURES.



I COULD
KILL HER EASILY
ENOUGH, YET THAT
MAY SHE WOULD DIE
WITHOUT ONCE
SEEING THE
ERROR OF HER
WAYS.



IF POSSIBLE, I WANT HER
TO BE FORCED TO CONFRONT
HER SIN, TO SEE AT LAST THE
WAY OF *RIGHT LIVING* FOR A
HUMAN BEING, THE TRUE PATH
IN LIFE FOR A WOMAN, AND
TAKE HER OWN LIFE, BY
HER OWN HAND.

SUCH IS THE
DEEPEST DESIRE
OF THIS PATHETIC
CLUCKOLD. LAUGH
AT ME IF YOU
WILL.



AND THIS
WOMAN, YOU
STILL...?

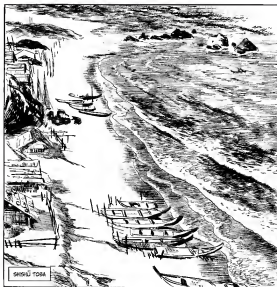


IT HURTS
ME TO ADMIT
IT, BUT I
ONLY LINGER
IN THIS WORLD
BECAUSE I
LOVE HER
STILL.

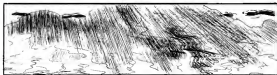
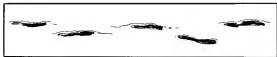


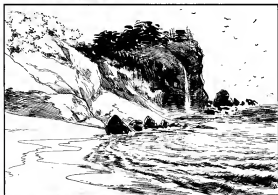




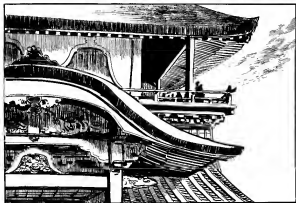






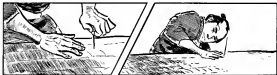








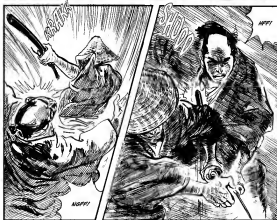


















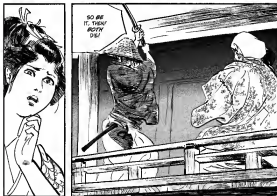














YET, THE LOYAL RETAINER
MUST PROTECT HER LORD, THOUGH
SHE SACRIFICE HER OWN CHILD.
SOON IS THE WAY OF PEACE, THE
WAY OF SHARD. HOWEVER, THIS IS
TRUE ONLY IF THE CHILD IS ACT
OF LORD SEIZAN'S BLOOD,
AND THUS NOT HIS
RIGHTFUL HEIR

F-
FORGIVE
ME, MY
LORD!

HANAKIYO...
HANAKIYO IS
HAKKON'S
SON...

HAKIYU
IS...IS THIS
TRUE?



FORGIVE
ME, MY
LORD!

WELL-
SPOKEN, MY
LADY. IF I HAD
NOT HEARD THOSE
WORDS, LORD
SEIZAN, THE CHILD,
AND KIDDED
YOURSELF...

...ALL WOULD
HAVE DIED BY
MY SWORD!

....
....!









the sixty-second



A Promise of Potatoes















BOYS FOUND IS
SACK AND KAN'T MOVE
OR SIT FOOD PLEASE
HELP. THANK U.













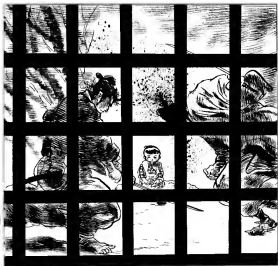


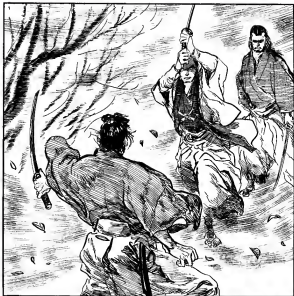


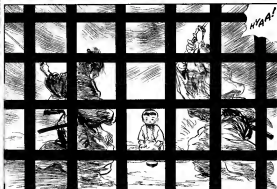




















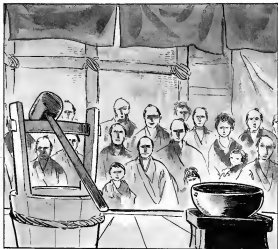




the sixty-third

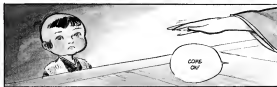


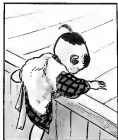
Wife Killer?







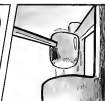


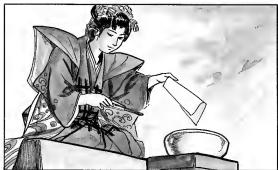












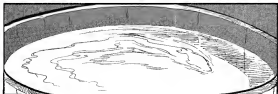












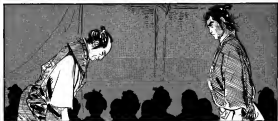


















YA CALL
YERSELF A
MAGISTRATE, YA
SWEARY LIT,
MAGISTRATE?

I'VE HAD
IT UP T' HERE
WITH YER DADA
FINE AMFES?



YA JES? FILL
UP 'BOUT EIGHTY
PERCENT O' THAT
BOWL, SEE? THEN,
ON THE DRY PART,
WHERE FOLK
KN'T SEE...

...YA PASTE ON
A BIT O' SACKLESS
MAGGIE WITH PORAGE,
SEE, AND LIGHT
THE PAPER WITH IT! A
DADA JESUS TRICK,
THAT ONE!











HEH, HEH,
THAT'S
KAPPA!

KAPPA
KASA CAN SEE
THROUGH ANYBODY'S
KAMA MAGIC TRICK
MR. DAVISE.



AND HE HAS
TWO DEARLY
FATHERLY...
KILLERS.



WHenever
we set up our
stages, those
three come out
of nowhere
and demand a
payoff.

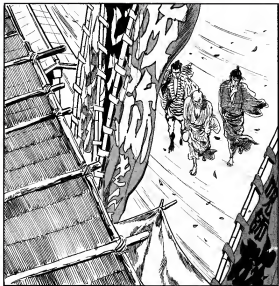


IF YOU GIVE
THEM WHAT THEY
ASK FOR, THEY GO
OFF AND ABOUT SEVEN
MINUTES, BUT REFLING, AND
THEY START THEIR KAMA
JOKES - JOKESTERS!
ALL OUR TRICKS.











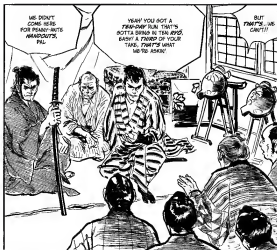


















INMITY



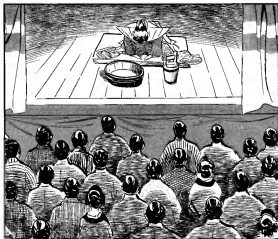
AND IN
EXCHANGE...
IF HE DARES
BREAK MY HONOR,
I'LL PUT OUT
HIS EYES!

IS THAT
ACCEPTABLE
TO YOU?



YES!
I KNOW IT
WILL TAKE
THAT LONG!

































GLOSSARY

bangashira

Commander of the guard.

bushi

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushidō

The way of the warrior. Also known as *shidō*.

cho

1. Approximately 300 meters.
2. Even numbers.

daimyō

A feudal lord.

dayū

"Maestro." A term applied to musicians and other stage performers. Many performers in Japan take stage names, and some musicians were also involved in the entertainment industry.

Edo

The capital of medieval Japan and the seat of the shogunate. The site of modern-day Tokyo.

fukumi-yari

A telescoping spear, the segments collapsing into one another.

haiku

Traditional short verse, with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern.

han

1. A feudal domain.
2. Odd numbers.

hanshi

Servant in the service of a *han*.

hanoriŋŋies

Japan is a class and status society and

proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Pilgrim and Cat*:

chaw – for children, young women, and close friends

dōw – archaic, used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures

san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals

sanw – used for superiors

sewse – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians.

jōdai

Castle warden. The ranking *han* official in charge of a *daimyō*'s castle and *han* when the *daimyō* was in residence in *Edo*. Often the *jōdai* was also the senior elder or *kunō*, of the *han*.

kaminaga

A mature woman. Literally "long hair."

kuge

Aristocracy. Members of the imperial court in Kyoto.

kurokote

Guantlets bound with iron plates.

meifumadō

The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

meishu

A village chieftain. In Edo Japan, a select handful of *meishu* were assigned official duties by the *machibayō* (Edo city commissioner) and local *shikw* (magistrate). Peasants were forbidden to bear arms and had no family names, but these select few were given special dispensation to wear a sword and pass down their family name.

metsuke

Inspector. A post combining the duties of chief of police and chief intelligence officer.

mon

A copper coin.

origami

Literally "folded paper." The art of making figures from single sheets of folded paper.

oyabun

The boss of a *yakusa* gang. Literally "father status." His underlings were known as *akusi*, or children.

oyata

The head of a troupe of performers.

rōnin

A masterless samurai. Literally "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *hane*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shōgunate, many impoverished rōnin became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

ryō

A gold piece, worth 60 monme or 4 kan.

ryū

Often translated as "school." The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any *shikō* students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own dojo training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many ryū also had a set of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school inmates.

sankin kōtai

The Tokugawa required that all daimyō

spend every other year in Edo, with family members remaining behind when they returned to their *han*. This practice increased Edo's control over the daimyō, both political and fiscal, since the cost of maintaining two separate households and traveling to and from the capital placed a huge strain on *han* finances.

Sanzu River

The Japanese equivalent of the River Styx. On their way to the afterlife, the dead must take boats across the River Sanzu.

sekisho

Checkpoint regulating travel from Edo to other parts of the country. All travelers had to submit papers at official checkpoints along the main highways in and out of Edo.

seppuku

The right to kill oneself with honor to atone for failure, or to follow one's master into death. Only the samurai class was allowed this glorious but excruciating death. The abdomen was cut horizontally, followed by an upward cut to spill out the intestines. When possible, a *kashikusa* performed a beheading after the cut was made to shorten the agony.

shinan

Chief instructor.

shiraha-dori

The Yagyu technique of "naked blade capture."

shōgi

A Japanese board game, with rules similar to chess.

sun

Approximately 3 centimeters.

tegata

Official travel pass for visiting *sekisho*.

tsubo

The traditional cry at the start of a dice game. The dice man shows the customers that the cup is empty.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Love Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies, written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays, and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

Love Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kopuryō Densetsu*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1972, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Assassin* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryoichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gokugo Seisaku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear. "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kawa-shibari*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kabu-ten* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kabu-ten* readers.

In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinski*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Koror*

Oboro (*Love Wolf and Cobb*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme-song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.



THE RONIN REPORT

By David S. Hofhine

The Dotanuki Sword of *Lone Wolf and Cub*

I have been working full time as a professional *togishi* (Japanese sword polisher) in the United States for nine years, and I have been a fan of *Lone Wolf and Cub* since the first English translations were published by First Comics back in the late 1980s. I would like to offer some general information regarding the Dotanuki sword depicted in the series.

Throughout the various English publications of *Lone Wolf and Cub*, Dotanuki has been referred to as a type of sword, the name of a specific sword, and perhaps a sword smith. I would like to put to rest the confusion if possible. The type of sword used by Itto Ogami is called a *katana*. This is a curved sword over 60 cm in length. It is worn through the belt, cutting edge up. This type of blade came into widespread use during the middle of the *Muromachi* period (1392-1572) and is the Japanese "samurai" sword best known to this day. The *katana* has a shorter, straighter, and heavier blade than the

older style *tachi* sword of the *Kamakura* period. These changes were made to make the blade faster to draw by an unmounted samurai. The shorter, heavier blade was also more effective against the heavier armor of the day.

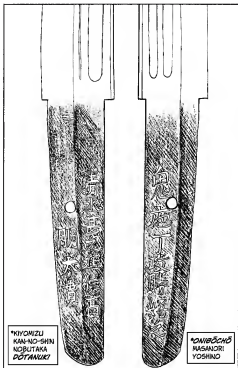
There have been many famous “named” blades throughout Japanese history: *Kogarasu-maru* (“The Little Crow”) and *Hocho Masamune* (“Masamune’s Kitchen Knife”), for example. The Dotanuki blade of Itto Ogami does not appear to be one of these “named” blades. Rather, it seems to refer to the historical Dotanuki school of sword smiths. Koike and Kojima, being excellent students of Japanese history, must have been aware of this reasonably well-known and respected group of sword smiths.

The Dotanuki school of sword-making was based in Higo province on the island of Kyushu. It was most active during the late 1500s and early 1600s. Dotanuki school work draws heavily on the Yamato tradition of sword-making. The school featured many smiths who signed the name Dotanuki to their swords along with other information about where and when the blade was made. A typical *mei* (*tang* signatures) would include island, province, school, and personal names, such as: Kyushu Higo Dotanuki Hyobu. The Dotanuki

school blades were very sturdy and designed to stand up to heavy use. Their early *katana* are described as rustic, inelegant, and massive, with their greatest asset being their cutting ability.

After the unification of Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate, a period of relative peace came into being. This is known as the Edo period (1600-1867). During this time, the arts flourished and swords became more elaborate and decorative. There was a trend in some sword-making schools toward aesthetic appeal over functionality as their samurai clientele became more affluent. This was the case with many of the swords being produced in Hizen province, a neighbor of Higo province. The Hizen blades of the Edo period were very graceful and refined, but they were also known for their thin skin steel. In time, the skin steel would polish through, revealing the rough iron core and weakening the blade. To this day, Hizen blades are prized by collectors for their beauty and dreaded by polishers for their thin skin steel. The early Dotanuki school blades, in contrast, remained dedicated to material application above all.

In the pages of *Lone Wolf and Cub*, Koike and Kojima do provide us with an interesting bit of evidence as to the origin of Itto's Dotanuki. In Volume 5, page 158, we find an *oshigata* (paper drawing of a



blade or a portion of a blade) representing two swords. The blade on the left, presumably Itto's sword, is signed Kiyomizu Kan-no-shin Nobutaka, Dotanuki. The first two *kanji* (old-style Japanese calligraphy characters) used to spell out DO TAN UKI, however, are different than the *kanji* used by the actual Dotanuki school of sword smiths. Furthermore, there is no record of a smith by the name of Nobutaka ever working with the Dotanuki group.

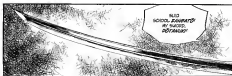
There was a famous line of smiths named Nobutaka that ran for ten generations from 1573 to 1865, but they were based in Owari province halfway across Japan and never signed Dotanuki. Of this Nobutaka line, one smith did indeed sign with the same *kanji* as shown in the right-hand column of this panel. This signature was used by the tenth and final generation of the Nobutaka, but this smith worked almost 150 years after the events of *Lone Wolf and Cub*, so this could not be the smith who forged the Lone Wolf's Dotanuki. Out of more than 30,000 recorded sword smiths, the tenth-generation Nobutaka is the only one ever to use these exact *kanji*.

Koike and Kojima obviously took some artistic license in their rendition of the tang inscription of Itto's Dotanuki sword. They must be forgiven for this, as these blades are incredibly rare nowadays. Even a reference to this group of smiths that includes

pictures of what a typical *tang* signature should look like is extremely hard to find.

It is my conclusion that the Dotanuki sword used by Itto Ogami in the *Lone Wolf and Cub* series must have been based on the reputation of the historical Higo Dotanuki sword-smith group. When it is referred to as “Dotanuki” or “a Dotanuki,” the authors are referring to the smiths that made it and the qualities typified in their work. The dates and description of a stout, heavy blade, made for serious cutting, match perfectly. The concept of sword-makers remaining loyal to the tradition of making strong, functional blades during a period of extended peace is a perfect metaphor for Itto’s dedication to the code of *bushido* in what is illustrated as an increasingly lawless and corrupt world.

Referring to Itto’s Dotanuki is like referring to someone’s Colt in a western novel. The gun’s “name” is not “Colt,” nor does it indicate one specific type



of gun such as a pistol, rifle, or shotgun. It would, however, be understood by the reader that the gun in question would be the type associated with cowboys and gunslingers, the type used in the “quick-draw” and “showdown.” Similarly, Dotanuki is neither a specific blade’s name nor a particular type of sword blade such as a *tachi* or *katana*. It is, rather, a reference to a sword made by a specific historical group of sword smiths who were dedicated to producing serious battle swords with a primary concern for cutting ability.

These are conclusions I’ve reached based on my own research. I hope this information has been somewhat interesting or helpful. If you would like more information on Japanese swords or sword polishing, please feel free to visit my website at www.swordpolish.com.

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Unseen samurai under the thumb of a power-hungry woman; a beggar ronin seeking the downfall of his greedily ambitious wife; a woman driven to the depths of insanity by the murder of her child; the horribly burned husband seeking revenge; a good-for-nothing transient willing to use a child to make easy money; a lady magician threatened by swindling gangsters: all of these people have something in common — the need to regain their honor, and in feudal Japan, this quest almost always means death. As Ogami Itto, a wandering assassin on a road to vengeance, crosses paths with each of these tragic souls, they learn there is nothing left in this world except honor, vengeance, death, and blood.

"In addition to the scope and depth of the story itself, the artwork is complex and breathtaking . . . Lone Wolf and Cub isn't confined by genres — it defines its own."

— Andrew A. Smith
Scripps Howard News Service

■ EISNER AWARD WINNER
■ HARVEY AWARD WINNER

GRAPHIC NOVEL / MANGA



Front cover illustration
by FRANK MILLER
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子連れ狼